(a) whether it is a fact that limestone export from Rajasthan has been on a gradual decline due to Government's decision to reduce import duty and hike rail and ocean freight charges;

(b) if so, the details of limestone export during the last five years, year-wise; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to revive limestone exports in the near future?

THE MINISTER TO STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) State-wise data on the export of limestone are not maintained by the Government. However, the export during the past five years for the country as a whole is given below:

(Value in Rs. Crores)

1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
24.35	10.06	11.90	11.89	15.99

[Soruce: DGCI&S]

(c) The Department of Commerce provides Market Development Assistance (MDA) for promotion of exports, for all products including limestone for participation in overseas trade fairs/exhibition and overseas publicity.

Indo-South Korea Trade Agreement

310. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any trade agreement was signed between India and South Korea in October last when President of South Korea visited the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) to what extent the trade between the two countries is expected to increase as compared to the present level, indicating the new items proposed to be exported to and imported from that country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Package for tea and coffee industry

311. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to come out with a package for tea and coffee industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government also propose to extend subsidy scheme to this sector; and

(d) what is the position of these items in export sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) The Government is considering a relief package for cofffee sector to solve the credit related problems of the coffee industry. Tea Board has proposed a programme for replantation and rejuvenation of the old tea bushes in various tea gardens across the country.

(c) Yes, Sir. Both Tea and Coffee Boards extend subsidies to the tea and coffee industry under their ongoing 10th Plan schemes for various activities. The subsidy extended by the Tea Board to the tea industry covers activities like replanting, rejuvenation, pruning, creation of irrigation facilities, modernization of the processing factories, etc. Coffee Board is extending financial assistance in the form of subsidy to the coffee industry to improve productivity through replanting, water augmentation, quality upgradation, pollution abatement, etc.

(d) Details of exports of tea and coffee during the last few years are as follows:—

Year	Tea (Quantity in million kg)	Coffee (Quantity in Metric tonnes)
2001-2002	190.00	213585
2002-2003	184.40	207333
2003-2004	183.07	232684
2004-2005*	86.97 (April-September 2004)	136189 (as on 25.11.2004)

*Estimated.

Setting up of leather desk

312. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up a leather desk, primarily to attract Italian investment in leather goods etc;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and